

WHO does HAT IN CONSUMER MATTERS?

So you think you're a pretty well informed consumer - O.K. let's see how you do on this quiz.

TRUE OR FALSE

- ① It is illegal for a store to raise the price of old shelf stock by removing the old price sticker and replacing it with a higher price tag.

TRUE ☐ FALSE ☐

- ② After you have signed a contract at a used car dealer's lot, you may cancel the agreement.

TRUE ☐ FALSE ☐

See back page for answers



Consumer and
Corporate Affairs Canada
Ontario Region

Consommation
et Corporations Canada
Région de l'Ontario



Ontario

Ministry of
Consumer and
Commercial
Relations

Ministère de
la Consommation
et du
Commerce

The Marketplace

Every day, individuals, business firms and institutions buy, sell and exchange millions of dollars' worth of goods and services throughout Canada, creating what has come to be known as the "marketplace".

Making sure that the marketplace is fair and consumers are protected is a responsibility and concern at both federal and provincial levels of government. Each has a department which deals with matters related to the marketplace.

Who Does What?

The federal department, Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada (CCAC), has regulations dealing with the production, packaging, distribution and advertising of products. The Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations (MCCR) deals with the transaction between a consumer and business.

To give you a specific idea of who's responsible for what, let's use an advertised product as an example:

- The federal government's laws forbid false and misleading advertising of any kind - printed, broadcast or posted. As a consumer, you may complain about the ad, even if you have no intention of buying the advertised product.
- The provincial government gets into the picture when a consumer actually buys a product and finds that it doesn't live up to advertising and sales claims. The province also deals with transactions when promises such as warranties and guarantees are not honoured.

Both the federal and provincial governments believe that business, consumers and government each have a role to play in making sure our marketplace is fair for everyone. Laws can set and monitor the standards, and business can operate openly and fairly, but it's a well-informed consumer who is best able to make wise marketplace decisions.

How to Contact Us

Both departments handle enquiries and can take action on a complaint if it is covered under the legislation. In Ontario, the main offices are:

Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations (provincial)

Consumer Information Centre
555 Yonge Street
Main Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2H6
Telephone: (416) 326-8555
Toll Free: 1-800-268-1142
TDD: (416) 326-8566

MCCR has Consumer Services Bureaus in the following centres:

Hamilton	(416) 521-7554
Ottawa	(613) 787-4048
Sudbury	(705) 675-4378
Toronto	(416) 326-8600
London	(519) 675-7605
Peterborough	(705) 743-8728
Thunder Bay	(807) 475-1641
Windsor	(519) 973-1484

Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada (federal)

Ontario Regional Office
4900 Yonge Street
Suite 601
North York, Ontario
M2N 6B8
Telephone: (416) 224-4031
TDD: (416) 224-3012

For those consumers outside Toronto, check the Blue Pages of your local telephone directory or write to the above address.

CONSUMER AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

There are four program areas in Ontario's Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations where legislation affects consumer transactions.

BUSINESS PRACTICES DIVISION

- The main objectives of Ontario's consumer protection and business laws are ethical standards of conduct and transactional fairness in the marketplace. Motor vehicle repairs and health and fitness clubs are two examples of industries covered by this legislation.
- The division also regulates specific industries through legislation requiring licensing and registration in such areas as real estate, motor vehicle dealerships and salespeople, travel agents and wholesalers, collection agencies, consumer reporting agencies, cemeteries and funeral services.
- The Ontario New Home Warranty Program, which provides important protection for people buying new housing.

and the Ontario Motor Vehicle Arbitration Plan (OMVAP) are associated with MCCR. OMVAP helps settle disputes over defects in new vehicles sold in Ontario.

- Public entertainment standards in the areas of lotteries and theatres is also a responsibility.

General Enquiries

Licensing/registration	(416) 326-8800
New Home Warranty	(416) 229-9200
OMVAP	(416) 964-0496
Consumer Complaints	

(See Consumer Services
Bureau telephone numbers)

TECHNICAL STANDARDS DIVISION

- Public safety is the primary concern of this division, through its licensing, certification, registration and inspection programs.

General Enquiries

Pressure Vessels Safety	(416) 234-6000
Elevating Devices	(416) 234-6060
Fuel Safety	(416) 234-6030
Upholstered & Stuffed Articles	(416) 234-6088

PROPERTY AND COMPANY REGISTRATION

- By maintaining records about Ontario businesses and property, this division plays an important role.
- The Companies Branch incorporates, dissolves and revives businesses, as well as registering partnerships and proprietorships. The Personal Property Security Registration Branch registers personal property that has been pledged as collateral.

- Consumers may make enquiries about these records for a fee.

General Enquiries

Company Registration	(416) 593-8880
Land Registry	Check local directory
Personal Property Security Registration	(416) 596-3766

BEVERAGE ALCOHOL

- The Liquor Control Board (LCBO) operates 621 retail stores across Ontario in a socially responsible manner for the sale of over 3,000 beverage alcohol products.
- The Liquor Licence Board (LLBO) regulates the sale, service and consumption of liquor in licensed establishments in a manner consistent with the promotion of moderation and responsibility.

General Enquiries

Liquor Control Board (LCBO)	(416) 864-2570
Liquor Licensing (LLBO)	(416) 326-0425
LCBO INFOLINE	1-800-324-4400

CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS CANADA

In carrying out the mandate of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the department protects, assists and advocates consumer interest and promotes fairness in the marketplace.

BANKRUPTCY

- Regulates the insolvency process and the licensing of bankruptcy trustees; investigates possible offences under the Bankruptcy Act;
- Maintains records of the status of individuals and companies who have filed for bankruptcy;
- Seeks to increase awareness of debtors of the real causes of their financial problems, promotes understanding of the bankruptcy process and provides information to enable debtors to better cope with the complex credit system.

COMPETITION POLICY

- Investigates offences under the Competition Act including misleading advertising and deceptive marketing practices;
- Reviews advertising proposals from businesses on request to advise them of potential infractions;
- Provides information to the legal and business communities on the Competition Act.

CONSUMER PRODUCTS

- Inspection of food and consumer products at retail, wholesale, manufacturing and import levels to ensure accuracy and to

prevent misrepresentation and economic fraud;

- Investigation of complaints regarding advertising, packaging, labelling, composition, net quantity and quality standards of foods, textiles, jewellery, precious metals and pre-packaged non-food products;
- Registration of CA numbers for textile dealers.

CONSUMER POLICY

- Studies and analyzes consumer issues; works with the government and private sector to promote consumer interests;
- Administers programs of grants and contributions to voluntary organizations.

ELECTRICITY AND GAS

- Inspection of accuracy of meters used in the measurement of the sale of electricity and natural gas;
- Consumers who suspect their meters are inaccurate should contact their local utility. If resolution of the problem is not achieved, then consumers should contact the electricity and gas meter inspection office.

PRODUCT SAFETY

- Inspection to ensure the safety of consumer products such as toys, cribs, strollers, pacifiers, textile flammability and household chemicals;
- Information on the safe use of consumer products.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

- Inspection of accuracy of trade devices (scales, fuel dispensers, etc.) and packages and goods sold on the basis of measurement.

CORPORATIONS

- Supplies forms related to the Canada, Business Corporations Act (federal incorporation) Canada Corporations Act Part II (non-profit groups);
- Protection of minority shareholders' interests.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- Administration of intellectual property systems: patents, copyrights, trade marks, industrial design, and integrated circuit topography.

LOBBYING

- Register of federal lobbyists open to public inspection.

Now for the answers:

- False.** As long as the store removes or obscures the old price sticker, it is legal to sell the product at a higher price even though it is old shelf stock. Federal "double ticketing" legislation states that when a product is marked with two or more clearly visible prices, it is illegal to charge the higher price.
- False.** Once you have signed the contract you have made an agreement to purchase the car. It is possible that the dealer may make a special exception and cancel the contract, but there is no obligation on the dealer's part to do so.